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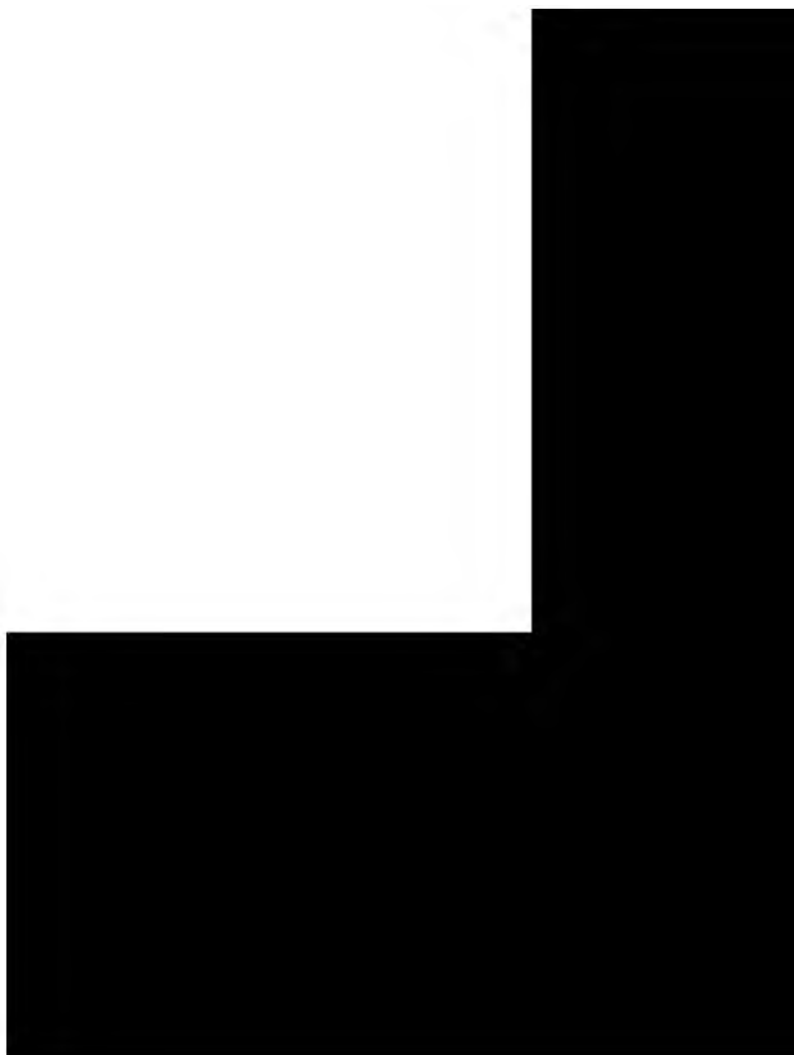
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by Robert Floyd. see Founde

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THE  
ACTOR.  
A  
POETICAL EPISTLE.

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T H E  
A C T O R.

A  
POETICAL EPISTLE  
T O  
*BONNELL THORNTON, Esq.*

*Quocunque animum auditoris agunto.*

HOR.

---

L O N D O N,  
Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-mall*. MDCCLX.



THE HISTORY OF THE

65

MONASTERY OF



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T H E  
A C T O R.

**A**CTING, dear *Bonnell*, it's Perfection draws  
From no Observance of mechanic Laws.

No settled Maxims of a fav'rite Stage,  
No Rules deliver'd down from Age to Age,  
Let Players nicely mark them as they will,  
Can e'er entail hereditary Skill.

If 'mongst the humble Hearers of the Pit,  
At some lov'd Play the old Man chance to fit,

B

Am

the Mind recalls an Object held more  
and hates the Copy that it comes so ne  
hy lov'd we *Wilks's* Air, *Booth's* nerve  
them 'twas natural, 'twas all their ov  
*Garrick's* Genius must our Wonder r  
ut gives his Mimic no reflected Praise.  
hrice happy Genius, whose unrival'd  
hall live for ever in the Voice of Fame!  
is thine to lead with more than magic  
he Train of captive Passions at thy W  
o bid the bursting Tear spontaneous  
the sweet Sense of sympathetic Woe

And at the old Man's Look and frantic Stare  
 'Tis *Lear* alarms me, for I see him there.  
 Nor yet confin'd to tragic Walks alone  
 The comic Muse too claims thee for her own.  
 With each delightful Requisite to please,  
 Taste, Spirit, Judgment, Elegance, and Ease,  
 Familiar Nature forms thy only Rule,  
 From *Ranger's* Rake to *Drugger's* vacant Fool.  
 With Powers so pliant, and so various blest,  
 That what we see the last, we like the best.  
 Not idly pleas'd at Judgment's dear Expence  
 But burst outrageous with the laugh of Sense.

PERFECTION'S Top with weary Toil and Pain  
 'Tis Genius only that can hope to gain.  
 The Play'r's Profession (tho' I hate the Phrase,  
 'Tis so *mechanic* in these modern Days)

ong-reit Passion bolts into the  
ind untouch'd, what is it but Grimace  
s one Standard make your just Appeal  
es the golden Secret; learn to FEEL.  
ol or Monarch, happy or distrest,  
ctor pleases that is not *possess'd*.  
CE on the Stage in *Rome's* declining D  
n Christians were the Subject of their P  
ersecution dropp'd her iron Rod,  
Mortals wag'd an impious War with  
ctor flourish'd of no vulgar Fame,  
re's Disciple, and *Genest* his Name.



Resign'd with Patience to Religion's Laws,  
 Yet braving Monarchs in his *Saviour's* Cause.  
 Fill'd with th' Idea of the sacred Part,  
 He felt a Zeal beyond the reach of Art,  
 While Look and Voice, and Gesture all exprest  
 A kindred Ardour in the Player's Breast,  
 Till as the Flame thro' all his Bosom ran,  
 He lost the Actor and commenc'd the Man:  
 Profest the Faith, his pagan Gods denied,  
 And what he acted then, he after died.

THE Player's Province they but vainly try,  
 Who want these pow'rs *Deportment, Voice, and Eye.*

THE Critic Sight 'tis only *Grace* can please  
 No Figure charms us if it has not *Ease.*

There

I rate no Actor's Merit from his Size.  
Superior Hight requires superior Gra  
And what's a Giant with a vacant F

THEATRIC Monarchs in their trag  
Affect to mark the solemn Pace of Sta  
One Foot put forward in Position stro  
The other like its Vassal dragg'd alo  
So grave each Motion, so exact and  
Like wooden Monarchs at a Puppet  
The Mien delights us that has nativ



UNSKILFUL Actors, like your mimic Apes,  
 Will writhe their Bodies in a thousand Shapes;  
 However foreign from the Poet's Art,  
 No tragic Hero but admires a Start.  
 What though unfeeling of the nervous Line,  
 Who but allows his *Attitude* is fine?  
 While a whole Minute equipoiz'd he stands,  
 Till Praise dismiss him with her echoing Hands.  
 Resolv'd, though Nature hate the tedious Pause,  
 By Perseverance to extort Applause.  
 When *Romeo* sorrowing at his *Juliet's* Doom,  
 With eager Madness bursts the canvass Tomb,  
 The sudden Whirl, stretch'd Leg, and lifted Staff,  
 Which please the Vulgar, make the Critic laugh.

To



pleasing Pow'rs Distortions & Excess

and nicer Judgment always loaths Excess  
Sock or Buskin who o'erleaps the Bound  
gufts our Reason, and the Taste conf

OF all the Evils which the Stage molest  
ate your Fool who overacts his Jest.

Who murders what the Poet finely writ,  
and like a Bungler haggles all his Wit,  
With Shrug, and Grin, and Gesture out  
and writes a foolish Comment with his Pen  
and *Johnson* once, tho' *Cibber's* perter V

With steady Face, and sober hum'rous Mien,  
 Fill'd the strong Outlines of the comic Scene.  
 What was writ down, with decent Utterance spoke,  
 Betray'd no Symptom of the conscious Joke;  
 The very Man in Look, in Voice, in Air,  
 And though upon the Stage, he seem'd no Play'r.  
 The Word and Action should conjointly suit,  
 But acting Words is labour too minute.  
 Grimace will ever lead the Judgment wrong,  
 While sober Humour marks th' Impression strong.  
 Her proper Traits the fixt Attention hit,  
 And bring me closer to the Poet's Wit;  
 With her delighted o'er each Scene I go,  
 Well-pleas'd, and not ashamed of being so.

'Tis not enough the *Voice* be found and clear,  
 'Tis Modulation that must charm the Ear.

e fame soft Sounds of *all*  
n only make the yawning Hearers doze

THE Voice all Modes of Passion can ex  
hat marks the proper Word with proper  
ut none emphatic can that Actor call,  
Who lays an equal Emphasis on *all*.

SOME o'er the Tongue the labour'd Me  
Slow and delib'rate as the parting Toll,  
Point ev'ry Stop, mark ev'ry Pause so f  
Their Words, like Stage-Proceffions sta  
A *Prostration* but creates Disgust,



Nor proper, *Thornton*, can those Sounds appear,  
 Which bring not Numbers to thy nicer Ear;  
 For them in vain the pleasing Measure flows  
 Whose Recitation runs it all to Prose;  
 Repeating what the Poet sets not down,  
 The Verb disjointing from its friendly Noun.  
 While Pause, and Break, and Repetition join  
 To make a Discord in each tuneful Line.

SOME placid Natures fill th' allotted Scene  
 With lifeless Drone, insipid and serene;  
 While others thunder ev'ry Couplet o'er,  
 And almost crack your Ears with Rant and Roar.  
 In so much Noise but little Sense is found,  
 As empty Barrels make the greatest Sound.

And *Hamlet's* hollow Voice and fixt A  
More powerful Terror to the Mind con  
Than he, who swol'n with big impetuo  
Bullies the bulky Phantom off the Stag

THE Modes of Grief are not includ  
In the white Handkerchief and mourn  
A single Look more marks th' intern  
Than all the Windings of the lengthen

Up to the *Face* the quick Sensation  
And darts its meaning from the spe



IN vain *Ophelia* gives her Flowrets round,  
 And with her Straws fantastic strews the Ground ;  
 In vain now sings, now heaves the desp'rate Sigh,  
 If Phrenzy sit not in the troubled Eye.  
 In *Cibber's* Look commanding Sorrows speak,  
 And call the Tear fast trick'ling down my Cheek.

HE who in Earnest studies o'er his Part  
 Will find true Nature cling about his Heart.  
 All from their Eyes impulsive Thought reveal,  
 And none can want Expression, who can feel.

THERE is a Fault which stirs the Critic's Rage,  
 A Want of due Attention on the Stage.  
 There have been Actors, and admir'd ones too,  
 Whose tongues wound up set forward from their cue.

In

the Prompter's Voice recall them home

VEST yourself of Hearers if you can,

strive to speak, and be the very Man.

Should the well-bred Actor wish to know

fits above To-night, or who below.

And th' harmonious Tones of Grief or Rage

in Squallers oft disgrace the Stage.

And with a simp'ring Leer, and Bow profound

squeaking *Cyrus* greets the Boxes round

the proud *Mandane* of imperial Race,



To suit the Dress demands the Actor's Art,  
 Yet there are those who over-dress the Part.  
 To some prescriptive Right gives settled Things,  
 Black Wigs to Murd'ers, feather'd Hats to Kings.  
 But *Michel Cassio* might be drunk enough,  
 Tho' all his Features were not grim'd with Snuff.  
 Why shou'd *Pol Peachum* shine in fatten Cloaths?  
 Why ev'ry Devil dance in scarlet Hose?

BUT in Stage-Customs what offends me most  
 Is the Slip-door, and slowly-rising Ghost.  
 Tell me, nor count the Question too severe,  
 Why need the dismal powder'd Forms appear?

WHEN chilling Horrors shake th' affrighted King,  
 And Guilt torments him with her Scorpion Sting;  
 When



POET and Actor thus with blended Skill,  
 Mould all our Passions to their instant Will;  
 'Tis thus, when feeling *Garrick* treads th' Stage,  
 (The speaking Comment of his *Shakespear's* Page.)  
 Oft as I drink the Words with greedy Ears,  
 I shake with Horror, or dissolve with Tears.

O ne'er may Folly feize the Throne of Taste,  
 Nor Dulness lay the Realms of Genius waste.  
 No bouncing Crackers ape the Thundrer's Fire,  
 No Tumbler float upon the bending Wire.  
 More natural Uses to the Stage belong,  
 Than Tumblers, Monsters, Pantomime, or Song.  
 For other Purpose was that Spot design'd;  
 To purge the Passions and reform the Mind,

D

To

*Thornton*, to Thee I dare with Truth  
The decent Stage as Virtue's natural Fr  
Tho' oft debas'd with Scenes profane and  
No Reason weighs against it's proper U  
Tho' the lewd Priest his sacred Function  
Religion's perfect Law is still the same.

Shall they who trace the Passions from  
Shew Scorn her Features, her own Imag  
Who teach the Mind it's proper Force  
And hold the faithful Mirrour up to M  
shall their Profession e'er provoke Disda

gone, nor leave a fingle Trace behind

F I N I S.







